

DO MURALS REALLY MAKE AN IMPRESSION?

by

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Abstract

Art placed in a public setting has a remarkable way of touching people's lives on a regular basis. Normally situated in a spot for thousands of people to see, this artwork has the ability to inspire thousands. However, although many of those that create public art hope to arouse their audience, does it truly matter to the daily passerby? Or does public art merely blend into the scenery for those who encounter it as part of their daily routine? These were some of the many questions that I sought to answer with this research.

Focusing primarily on murals, the aim of this study is to uncover whether or not these huge public art displays have the ability to affect the quality of life of those who live among them. In order to measure the impact of murals I studied a test group of young students that live in Camden City and encounter three specific murals that were chosen for this research. Also included in this study is a brief history of public art and two of the most prominent mural programs in America, the Social and Public Art Resource Center in Los Angeles, and the Mural Arts Prom in Philadelphia. This research seeks to determine whether murals have an impact on individual's lives.

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INTRODUCTION

To leave an impression upon someone else means to have a lasting effect on them in some way, shape, or form, particularly on the intellect and conscience. During the late 1800's, Louis Leroy gave the word "impression" a significant place in the world of art. At an art exhibition, Louis mocked the work of a very serious group of artists' bold new art form where he unintentionally coined the term "Impressionism" as their style of painting. Upon seeing the works by artists now known to us as Impressionists, he commented on the incompleteness of their art by describing them as the work of amateurs. Making a mockery of their creations, Louis borrowed the word impression from Claude Monet's paintings called, "Impression: soleil levant," which was a part of an exhibition showcased in 1874, to describe what the artists produced on canvas.¹ Although Louis used the term as an insult, the word stuck and came to define this new, untraditional style of painting.

Art indeed leaves an impression, but does it have the ability to impact peoples' lives? Within the last several decades there has been a growing interest for public art to be utilized as a means to improve American cities that are in great need of change. Stemming from early 19th century movements, art enthusiasts believe that erecting public art can not only beautify their cities, but inspire change through the messages conveyed. Art can often be the catalyst for change, whether the creator seeks to unify *or* divide others because of the sentiments it evokes. It is also a common belief that art is a worthy investment for city boosters in order to improve urban environments. Although art often has the ability to inspire or rejuvenate certain areas, there is very little evidence

¹ Margaret Samu, "Impressionism: Art and Modernit," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd_imml.htm.

that indicates whether or not these works of art have had a lasting impact on people, specifically those that live amongst them. The aim of this research is to determine whether or not the presence of public artwork, mostly murals, has the ability to affect the quality of life of the people who live nearby it. In order to accomplish this effectively, it is necessary first to explore where the interests in beautifying America's cities first began.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Just as the Impressionist movement gained popularity around the world, the desire to reform declining cities in North America also took effect. During the late 19th century, American cities were growing at a rapid pace as part of the Industrial Revolution. Industries began to replace small, rural factories because of the mass production made possible by newly improved machinery. People were induced to move to the city to find work, and “...between 1860 and 1910, the number of American cities with more than 100,000 residents rose from 8 to 50. By 1910, several cities had passed the one million mark.”² Industrialization also encouraged immigrants to come to America in droves looking for opportunity. With limited space to accommodate large numbers of people, the new-comers were given insufficient living quarters. Areas known as tenement districts became a quick and easy solution to the issue of space; however, they were extremely overcrowded and ripe with diseases. Not only did people living in these areas remain in unsanitary environments, but they often worked in factories with extremely poor conditions, long hours, and low pay. Forced to survive in horrific living quarters, these people lived a less than favorable life. The new generation of laborers that inhabited the city no longer possessed the Victorian moral values that these cities once had. In reaction, traditionalists believed that cities were corrupting the moral integrity of the civic culture.

The rapid changes that cities were undergoing revealed the complicated dynamics of the American cities. Many believed that the overcrowded cities were becoming ugly—even monstrous— and that changes had to be made.³ At the

² Encyclopedia of Chicago, “Architecture: The City Beautiful Movement,” Chicago Historical Society, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/61.html>.

³ Ibid.

1893 Chicago World's Fair, "The City Beautiful Movement," emerged which sought to reverse the destruction of American cities by borrowing from European counterparts. This movement centered on the idea that cities could be both industrial powerhouses and beautiful places to reside. In cities across the United States, such as Washington, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Cleveland, city planners, as the twentieth century would know them, attempted to restore streets, bridges, waterfronts and parks, while addressing issues of space and inadequate sewage. Architects, artists, and city officials all attempted to reverse the declining status of their cities and struggled to restore the status of these American cities among the greatest in the world. However, much of this reform ignored the real social issues at the time such as social tensions resulting from mass immigration, poverty, and unjust working conditions. Because of this neglect, the rapid advancement of America's cities reached a halt. Pressing social issues, generated by such events as the Great Depression, began to take precedence over the beautification process.

In the decade preceding World War II, the Great Depression resulting from the stock market crash on October 29, 1929 devastated the world. The United States financial system was unprepared to face the immediate backlash of fearful people who rushed to withdraw the money they had invested in banks. What resulted was a severe depression that became impossible for politicians and lawmakers to ignore. All of the resources that once went to rebuilding cities had to go to work relief projects. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt headed a series of relief efforts to help fix the nation's problems known as The New Deal. This program included a series of relief organizations designed to both generate jobs and to improve the country as a whole by constructing new buildings, roadways, and many other public works improvements. One of the largest and

most influential programs he implemented was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which created public works projects. Roosevelt's WPA produced millions of jobs; most importantly to this research, it generated a vast amount of government support for the visual arts through the Federal Art Project sector.

The Federal Art Project made it possible for artists to flourish again in a world that had no ability to indulge in artistic pleasures. Those who were previously unemployed and unable to use their talents were given the chance to utilize their skills to serve the public good. The WPA made, "vast numbers of people – especially the young – aware of the visual arts and the personal potential of creative expression."⁴ Roosevelt not only made it possible for young, aspiring artists to have a future in the visual arts, he also popularized the *need* for public art to improve American cities. Right before the depression there was, "a strong interest in mural production."⁵ Recognizing the significance of murals, with the help of private investors, the WPA's total funding for art-patronage in America was \$83,427,929.93, and it is because of the WPA that, "Over four thousand public buildings received mural and sculpture decorations..."⁶ Yet it wasn't until the late 1960's and 1970's when mural artists created a, "... community-based process for creating murals."⁷ This movement changed the way that artists created murals, shifting the aim from not just creating works of art but incorporating the community in the mural making process. The WPA is

⁴Francis V. O'Connor, and National Endowment for the Arts. 1969. Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now; a report on the new deal art projects in New York City and state with recommendations for present-day federal support for the visual arts to the national endowment for the arts. by Francis V. O'Connor, (Greenwich, Conn: New York Graphic Society). 106.

⁵ Erica Bechk. Government Art in the Roosevelt Era: An Appraisal of Federal Art Patronage in the Light of Present Needs. *Art Journal* 20 (1) (Autumn, 1960), 3.

⁶ Ibid, 4.

⁷ Jane Golden, David Graham, Monica Kinney, Jack Ramsdale, and Robin Rice. Philadelphia Murals and the Stories They Tell, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 7.

one of the main reasons why art has continued to remain in the government's interest today.

While there are both practical and strategic reasons why murals are often utilized as public art forms, the main appeal for using murals as a major public art form is because the art is not only displayed in the city, but it also becomes a part of the city itself. Murals can be displayed all over, on subways, under bridges, and multi-story buildings, all locations that are already a part of the city's makeup, now with artistic beauty as a defining characteristic. Michael Benson states,

A successful painting can live in the mind as a personal landmark and cultural beacon. Successful community-based art keeps unfolding in the mind in the ways it allows real voices to be heard and the dignity and dilemmas of real communities to be felt and real dialogues across race and class to develop.⁸

As Benson describes, murals add a new voice to cities through artistic expression. Mural art is one of the rare forms of art that can become a part of almost any building or area that can be utilized as a canvas. Muralists in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Camden have fully taken advantage of the diversity of murals by having a significant presence of this art form within their city. Hoping to evoke change through art, muralists in both Los Angeles and Philadelphia have mural programs that stand out from the rest.

When people are subjugated because of their race, it forces them into extremely adverse situations with little means of success; such was the case of many people who have lived in Los Angeles (LA). According to Michael Flecher or the Washington Post, in Los Angeles County during 1960's, "...four out of five

⁸ Benson, Culture in Action, 27.

people were white.”⁹ While this was true in the 1960’s the Washington Post indicated that present day Los Angeles has encountered,

... a wave of immigration... where no ethnic or racial group holds the majority. The county's population of 9.5 million is now 41 percent Hispanic, 37 percent white, 11 percent Asian and 10 percent black. The Latino and Asian populations each have more than doubled in the past 20 years...¹⁰

This racial shift has occurred over a number of years and has significantly altered the dynamic of the city. In an extremely diverse city like Los Angeles, there are bound to be racial issues that emerge. The city of Philadelphia shared a similar fate to that of Los Angeles. Post-industrial Philadelphia encountered much of the same destruction that resulted from the dissimulation of whites and consequently, the city fell victim to a large presence of gangs. In result, gang graffiti has become a lasting presence in the cities.

Both limited job opportunities and racial discrimination have historically forced minorities to predominantly situate themselves in the cities because the quantity of jobs and low paying wages that mass production creates increase their chances of getting work. However, in Post World War II America, low wages and unequal treatment prompted minorities to become discontented and violent. The riots that wracked cities across the country in the mid 1960’s occurred in Atlanta, Oakland, New York, Chicago, and most significantly Detroit. These violent riots sparked what became known as “white flight,” where Caucasian’s moved out of cities like Los Angeles and Philadelphia and into the suburbs in order to escape the destruction. The result was that the unfortunate circumstances and

⁹ Michael A. Fletcher, “In L.A., a Sense of Future Conflicts,” *Washington Post.com*, April 7, 1998, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/meltingpot/melto407a.htm> (accessed August 23, 2010).

¹⁰ Ibid.

discrimination of blacks, as well as other ethnic groups, caused devastation to the cities themselves causing them to decline.

WHY PUBLIC ART?

The deterioration of some of America's greatest cities is a travesty, but art can possibly be used as a means to reverse this trend. Art has the ability to make a huge impact in peoples' lives. Historically, art has been used to both inspire and awe those that look upon it. Grand displays such as the Sphinx, the great artwork painted in the Sistine Chapel, and even the Statue of Liberty, have come to serve as symbols of the successes of a country. It is by borrowing from this tradition that public art is thought to be a useful tool to bring life back into distressed cities.

Works of art in a public setting can evoke emotion and spark great change within the areas that they are placed. Hence art-work can be a very powerful tool if used properly. Art has the ability to touch a person's soul and give a voice to undisclosed emotions or struggles that simply need a vehicle for expression. Public art is unique because although it is often designed with a specific audience in mind, it is put on display for the entire world to see. It is in essence owned by the public. What truly makes art public is when it is, "...conceived from larger audiences, and placed to garner their attention; meant to provide an edifying, commemorative, or entertaining experience; and convey messages through generally comprehensible content."¹¹ When art is placed in a public setting for daily passersby, it then becomes a means for conveying a certain message that the artist wishes to communicate to a large audience. Michael Brenson, author of *Culture in Action* declares that,

The greater the artist, the more each color, line, and gestures becomes both a current and river of thought and feeling. Great

¹¹ Cher Krause Knight, Public Art : Theory, Practice and Populism, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 1.

paintings condense moments, reconcile polarities, sustain faith in the inexhaustible potential of the creative act. As a result, they become, inevitably, emblems of possibility and power.¹²

Michael Brenson expresses how art can be a powerful tool if utilized in the right capacity. There are several artists who have decided to utilize public art to provoke change.

Muralist Judith Baca of the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) both recognizes the complex history of her city and publically celebrates its past with her talent for painting. Founded in 1976 by Baca, SPARC has successfully created a community-based mural program inspired by the Mexican artist movement. Resulting from the Mexican Revolution in the 1900's, Mexican Muralism was both an artistic and a political movement. Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, known as *Los Tres Grandes* or, "The Big Three," were the most famous Mexican muralists. They used murals as a means of protest in order to express the beliefs and discontentment of the people. Later taking their movement to America, they inspired many artists to use their talent to provoke social and political change. Baca drew her inspiration from "The Big Three" to begin the SPARC program and create a mural of monumental proportions.

When Baca was approached by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1974 to create a mural as part of a beautification project, she began to think big, really big.¹³ Baca, as well as several other artists, gathered 400 underprivileged youth to create a large scale public service project that would allow them to tell California's history through art. Working alongside Baca's team of 35 artists, the

¹² Michael Brenson, Mary Jane Jacob, and Eva M. Olson, Culture in Action: A public art program of Sculpture Chicago curated by Mary Jane Jacob, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 20.

¹³ Judy Baca, The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), http://www.sparcmurals.org:16080/sparcone/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1.

youth created “The History of California,” more commonly referred to as “The Great Wall of Los Angeles.” This work of art took seven years to make and is 13 feet high and nearly half a mile long. Situated in the Tujunga Flood Control Channel in North Hollywood, it is one of, if not the largest, mural in the world.¹⁴ People from all over the globe come to Los Angeles to see the splendor of this mural. Although the mural can stand alone as a great accomplishment, the mural is significant for being much more than an aesthetically pleasing work of art.

Judith Baca did not simply want to create art for art’s sake; she wanted it to contain a message of unity and to celebrate all Californians. By having underprivileged youth serve on the project, Baca was able to involve the community in the mural making process, which brings to life the message within the beautiful artistic display that they worked so hard to create. Baca’s “Great Wall” celebrates the diverse history of the city while at the same time creating a visible way in which young artists could also become a part of the history of their city. In a personal message on her website, Baca states her reason for creating this colossal mural, “I designed this project as an artist concerned not only with the physical aesthetic considerations of a space, but the social, environmental and cultural issues affecting the site as well.”¹⁵ Judith Baca’s consideration for the site itself that was chosen for the mural is why she is such an inspiration. The success of Judith Baca’s program is largely due to the fact that she has made the site itself the orator which will tell a vast amount of people the story of California for many years to come. She recognizes that the city itself is alive and breathing; she works very hard not to tamper with its character. Judith Baca inspired many artists

¹⁴ The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), “The Great Wall of Los Angeles”, http://www.sparcmurals.org:16080/sparcone/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1.

¹⁵ The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, http://www.sparcmurals.org:16080/sparcone/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1.

with her passion to make a difference through art. Among those artists is Philadelphia's Jane Golden

In 1986, Jane Golden was approached by the Mayor of Philadelphia, Wilson Goode, to oversee a program to combat the gang graffiti which plagued the city. Her goal was to redirect the graffiti writers to, "... help turn their destructive energies into creative ones."¹⁶ Once involved in what was called the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network, Golden realized the potential of the program that she had started to create. People who once used graffiti as means of expressing themselves became some of the first muralists in the internationally recognized Mural Arts Program.

There is no doubt that what Jane Golden has created in the Mural Arts Program has made an impact on the City of Brotherly Love. Jane Golden worked alongside Judith Baca in Los Angeles where she also learned how art could be used for political and social expression. Although she got her start in Los Angeles, it is in Philadelphia that Golden has made her mark on the world. She and her group of muralists have successfully erected more than 3,000 murals throughout the city since the inauguration of the program. One cannot visit the city for an extended period of time without seeing at least one of these masterpieces. There are tours that run daily traveling to a handful, but not nearly all, of the murals in the city. While there are many murals in the city, the process of creating them is very complex. Before the muralists transform a once barren or defaced wall, they must first pick a site to work with. Once the wall is chosen and approved by the owner to paint, Golden's team distributes flyers to everyone in the neighboring blocks. This process allows the community members to have

¹⁶ City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, Jane Golden, http://www.muralarts.org/whoweare/j_golden.php.

an input as to what the art would convey allowing the muralist to transform their ideas into a design.¹⁷ Each mural is a product of community meetings, sometimes door- to- door surveys, and a deep meaningful understanding of the communities in which they are placed. An idea may be set in motion before the site has been determined; however, it takes a great deal of planning to begin the mural making process.

The Mural Arts Program is truly revolutionary. This program not only centers on community outreach, but Jane Golden has also worked hard to expose the city of Philadelphia to many opportunities through art. The Mural Arts Program is a,

... \$6.9 million urban force that trains mural artists, provides after-school programs in painting, sculpture and metal work, and enlists at-risk kids, community groups, churches, businesses, truants, juvenile delinquents and convicted murderers in producing art for the public good.¹⁸

Jane Golden's mission is not to simply involve declared artists in the process of constructing a mural, but to incorporate all types of people, such those that are often disregarded as beyond all hope. She has established an effective way of reaching out to entire communities through multiple ways that greatly extend beyond the murals themselves.

The two prominent mural programs that have been discussed make it quite apparent that the community outreach which surrounds these programs is extremely effective. SPARC, the Mural Arts Program, as well as several other programs mentioned, have gained a lot of media attention because they are revolutionizing the way people view public art. Both Judith Baca and Jane Golden believe in order for art to be considered something shared by the public,

¹⁷ Melissa Dribben, *Gracing the City*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 27, 2008.

¹⁸ Ibid.

the creation of these pieces needs to involve the community in some way. If there is no involvement from the community, then it feels detached from the artwork.

While this may have proven to be true, is it always the case? Is the effect that public art has on the general public contingent upon community involvement?

The remainder of this paper will focus on these questions.

RATIONALE AND PREPARATION

Something that continually sparked my interest as I dove deeper and deeper into research about mural projects and public art was whether or not these works of art really did make a significant impact on people's perceptions of their cities. It seemed clear that they touched the lives of those who helped work on them, and the murals themselves may indeed have made people smile on occasion as they passed by the stunning works that these artists have created, but have the murals really affected their lives in any noticeable way? One prominent Camden muralist Cesar Viveros commented that, "Public art around the country is becoming more and more popular." He continues, "It's a way of empowerment for the people."¹⁹ Cesar Viveros's words have some truth to them, but they do not apply to all people. The young people who help create the public art works are undoubtedly empowered by their work; however, can it be said that the artwork empowers everybody? Jane Golden has made a similar statement, "Murals have this kind of personal impact. They engage you, stir questions, make you see things in new ways. I don't know whether it is their intense color, imposing size, or symbolic power, but they seem to be imbued with a mysterious energy that radiates outward, touching everyone who sees them."²⁰ Golden also indicated that only six murals out of 2,600 have been vandalized, suggesting a definite appreciation for the artwork that has been created. Since there are many murals in the city of Philadelphia, it is hard to believe that only six have been defaced. Based on the facts and my love for art overall, I agree with Golden when she states that murals "radiate outward," impacting people's lives. What concerns me is whether or not non-art-lovers also feel touched by works of art in

¹⁹ Dwight Ott, Muralist offers new wall outlet for teen energy, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 9, 2005.

²⁰ Golden, *Philadelphia Murals and the Stories They Tell*, 11.

the same way that I experience this emotion. This is precisely the problem that compelled me to find out more. I want to know how does this artwork really affect those who had nothing to do with the creation of the murals that are displayed in their cities, and does it affect their quality of life in any way?

The first task was to choose a city in which to focus. One city that has always sparked my interest is Camden. Cities like Camden have been almost completely abandoned in result of racial differences and the formation of the suburbs. Once Philadelphia's rival next door neighbor, Camden was an industrial city on the rise. The animosity that occurred between the white inhabitants, often European immigrants, and African Americans during late 1960's made it possible for the suburbs to become an extremely popular alternative to city life. Unsuccessful attempts have been made to revive the city, and the prospects of any renewal efforts look bleak. Cities just like Camden have been neglected and written off as impossible to mend—leaving little hope for change however there have been small scale efforts to implement public art reform.

Although I have lived in South Jersey my entire life, I have no memory of ever visiting the city until I began to attend graduate school there. Constantly living in Philadelphia's shadow, Camden can only boast about Rutgers University, where I have had the pleasure of both working and going to school, Campbell's Soup, and Cooper Hospital. Camden, much like many of the cities in the United States, has a very prosperous history; however, its rich past is followed by a tragic decline.

Situated between both Cooper River and the Delaware River, Camden had many thriving industries, but much of this changed after World War II. The GI Bill gave young families the freedom to move out of cities and into the suburbs,

which made it difficult to maintain successful businesses because the consumers were living elsewhere. After World War II a greater population of African Americans increased in Camden, driving even more people to move to the suburbs. African Americans, who were not given the same opportunities as whites to move to the suburbs, were now left in a city that was slowly declining. New developments such as the Cherry Hill Mall, completed in October of 1961, devastated Camden by drawing commerce and residents to the newly formed suburbs.²¹ Poverty and racial inequality became serious social concerns but one of the most pressing problems that resulted from white movement to the suburbs is that present day Camden now suffers severe abandonment. Almost every street has at least one condemned or abandoned home, and there are little to no real signs of improvement. Howard Gillette, author of *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City*, believes that the decline of this city is in large part due to bad political decisions or overall political inaction leaving Camden seemingly beyond repair.

I have spent a considerable amount of time in Camden over the past few years. During this time I have made several observations. Camden is a unique city. Roughly nine square miles, the city is saddled with an absurd number of homes that are completely run-down and abandoned because they are either unsafe to live in or the previous tenants could not afford to pay the rent. It is also a relatively quiet city. While there are the usual neighbors who frequently congregate outside and people milling around from place to place, Camden is not what one would call a “bustling city.” Unlike Camden, the City of Philadelphia still manages to support many successful businesses, constant foot traffic, and

²¹Howard Gillette, *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial Society*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 48.

visitors from all over to visit the historical city. While Camden does not attract tourists, one thing that Camden does share with Philadelphia is an array of beautiful murals.

In the city of Camden, there is not a program as well known as the Mural Arts Project, but Camden does have the Mural Program, run through Perkins Center for the Arts. As part of the Mural Program, Camden's prominent muralist Cesar Viveros has worked with a team of artists to create a number of fantastic murals throughout the city. Some murals are hidden within the small streets of Camden while others are put on display on the major roadways for all to see. These murals are not as great in number as Philadelphia's mural collection, but they are equal in beauty. On many occasions I had to suffer being honked at for not paying attention as I gazed at these works of art, unable to ignore their artistry. However, the reason why I wanted to study Camden's murals is because no matter how frequently I am in the city, I am simply a visitor to Camden and do not pass these murals regularly. I certainly can vouch for their attractiveness and ability to lift my spirits, but maybe those that see them daily experience indifference in their presence. Once the city was selected, the obvious thing to do next was determine which Camden residents to study.

Since everyone views art in a different way, I knew that I had to work with subjects who would be honest; in other words, I wanted to stay away from subjects who would give me exaggerated answers—college students were therefore out of the question. The most important element to my research was that the subjects I interviewed were people who live among the murals and also encounter them, possibly unknowingly, in their daily lives. The more I thought about who would be a good group to interview, I noticed that the subject of these

murals are often children. This lead me to realize that one key group of people that these murals are hoping to inspire and motivate are children. Murals are erected with the desire to change people's perspectives of cities by offering hope and giving them a new livelihood. Since they are the future, who better to ask about whether or not these murals accomplish this goal than children? Not only are young people honest but, unlike adults, today's society does not require them to be knowledgeable in the arts, and they feel no need to pretend. Young people are known to be blunt and honest, and those are exactly the types of answers that I wanted to guide this study. Therefore, I decided that, rather than using a random test group, I would specifically choose a group of students to study the murals in Camden.

The students that I selected are high school age students that all live in the city of Camden and are part of a scholarship program at Rutgers University called the Rutgers Future Scholars. These remarkable students have become a part of the Rutgers Future Scholars because of their financial needs, good grades, and ambition. I have gotten to know many of the Scholars extremely well because I have worked for the program for over two years. Since the type of research that I wanted to do was going to require students who were willing to participate, asking the Scholars to assist with this research was an obvious choice. These students are already self- motivated individuals, possibly posing a potential problem to my research because they may be naturally more inclined to take an interest in their surrounding environment. While I was aware that this could have invalidated some of my findings, I anticipated that it would still answer the major questions that I am asking. I also did not pick these students according to gender, ethnicity, or neighborhood. I am using students who wanted to participate and were physically able to do so according to availability and access

to transportation. Once the students were selected, the next step was to narrow down which murals would be the focus of this research.

I began by brainstorming how I could measure the impact that murals have on people's lives. One method would be to simply ask the students questions, such as, what do you think about this mural? Or how does this mural make you feel about your city and do you believe that it improves your city in any way? While this could have been an effective method of ascertaining whether or not people appreciate murals, I did not believe that it would supply me with enough evidence that the murals alone have a positive impact on their surrounding environment. Then I determined that the only way for me to measure whether or not these murals impact people's lives was to contrast areas that have murals with those that do not have any murals. By asking the same questions about mural sites and sites that have no artwork other than basic architecture, I am able to determine what ability, if any, in improving dilapidated areas.

Picking specific sites to conduct this research was a challenging task. Since there are many beautiful murals throughout Camden, I had to choose according to which ones were the most accessible to the public. There were three murals that I chose to contrast with non-mural sites. The first one is, *I Saw a City Invincible*, by Cesar Viveros, located on Haddon Avenue and Market Streets (Fig. 1), the second is on the side of the Camden County Aletha R. Wright Administration building located on Broadway and Federal (Fig. 2), and the last mural is painted on the side of Rafael Cordero Molina School at 601 Vine Street also painted by Cesar Viveros (Fig. 3). The sites used to contrast with the murals were even more difficult to determine. The goal was to choose locations that all

of the students encountered on a recurring basis that do not contain any publically displayed artwork. In order to select sites, I surveyed several students that I knew both lived and spent their free time in Camden. When I approached the students to tell me about certain places where their age group spent time outside, it was a hard task for them to pick places. Many of the students could name indoor locations, but according to the students I asked, there are not many public spaces in Camden where students like to spend time outside. In attempts to avoid this problem, I incorporated two places that the students could identify from the exterior, even though most of their time would be spent on the inside. The sites that these students identified were Camden High School located on Park Boulevard (Fig. 6 & 7), Whitman High Park (Fig. 4 & 5) located in the west side of Camden, and Litwins Market in North Camden (Fig. 8).

The study itself was designed to identify young people's feelings and opinions in reference to the specific places I mention in Camden. What I originally planned to do was to take students to different mural sites and ask them to fill out a series of questions while they were in the presence of the murals themselves. Then I realized that this wouldn't actually answer my question and it would turn into more of a critique of the actual artwork rather than a way of measuring their effect on the public. It wasn't until I realized that omitting the murals themselves from the intention of the research is precisely what would allow me to measure whether or not the students even noticed the murals and how they change their overall opinions of a certain area and in turn, their city as a whole. This new discovery proved to be a crucial factor in the success of my research.

FIELD RESEARCH

A test group of about 15 students were selected and agreed to participate in this study. Unfortunately, working with young students who have no real incentive to attend a study can be extremely risky and only 8 out of the 15 students actually showed up for the study. Once the students arrived, I conducted individual verbal interviews. The questionnaire can be located in Appendix A and student responses can be found in Appendix B. By holding the interviews verbally, I was able to elaborate if they were unsure of what I was asking and clarify any of the locations that pertained to this research. It was beneficial to verbally interview younger subjects because it takes the pressure off relieving them of a test-like experience. For each site I asked the students to first describe the area overall, using as many adjectives as possible, enabling the students to recall from memory what details they already knew about each place. Once the students exhausted all that they remembered of a given location, I provided them with a range of descriptive words to focus in on how they perceived the place more specifically. I then proceeded to give them a range of emotions to associate with that area. Providing them with a range of both adjectives and emotions made it easier for the students to give an answer that they otherwise would not have thought to give— this adds more depth to the research. Then we moved on to the next step.

After each student was interviewed individually, we took a bus to the six different locations. While at each location, I gave the students a notepad and instructed them to write down descriptions of the areas, as well as any specific things that they noticed. I also gave some of the students cameras so that they could take pictures of important things to remember, keeping the images fresh in

their memories. We spent roughly five minutes at each location while I prompted the students to take notice of their surroundings. Once we were finished visiting all of the sites, I took the students back to our original location and revisited the same questions that I asked them before we toured the designated areas. The following section will specifically cover some of the findings from the mural sites.

The first mural we visited is located on Haddon Avenue titled, *I Saw a City Invincible*, and it is one of the largest murals in Camden. This mural displays some of the cities industrial past, while representing the beauty of both the people and nature within the city of Camden. Within the mural there are prominent figures such as Walt Whitman and also children that embody creativity and innovation. Some people are together in the picture praising the Lord, reading, looking at the sky and holding hands rallying for peace. This intricate mural was chosen because it is located on one of the busiest streets in Camden.

Prior to visiting the site, many of the students described everyday things that they encounter on Haddon Ave. Student C described said that there are, "... buildings, people, sometimes cops because the police department over there, I see lights, bums...". Although the police station is across from the mural, there was no mention of the mural itself. Student D also described similar things, "The street has old buildings, not a lot of people—but people—I guess not so clean, a lot of trash." However, after we saw the site in person, Student C, as well as Student B, Student D, and Student F, mentioned the mural in the description provided. The bus stopped literally in front of the mural on the opposite side of the street, so it is surprising that only half of the students mentioned it in their description. Even though the four students mentioned the mural on Haddon

Avenue, only one student claimed their emotions to be happy while at this site. When I asked Student F to elaborate as to why the emotion associated with this site was happy, the student explained that it was, "... because of the mural. It is nice that people put stuff like that because it makes it look nicer." Although this student was not the only one to mention the mural, this was the only indication that the site was associated with a happy emotion because of the mural itself.

Our second mural stop was on Broadway and Federal Street where the artwork is located on the Camden County Administration building. This mural is situated on the side of the building that is facing the street and the way that it is positioned allows it to be seen from a great distance. Intended to display the industrial past of the city, this mural includes an assembly line of workers indicating Camden's participation in the mechanized production of goods. The ferry charging down the middle of the mural demonstrates Camden's dominant role in the ferry industry and the newly established connection to Philadelphia with the construction of the Ben Franklin Bridge in 1926 . While it is appropriately placed on the side of one of Camden's administration buildings, businesses in the area cause it to blend well with the scenery.

Before visiting the site, some of the students had negative things to say about this location. Student G stated that there are, "A lot of people, nasty (some of the people), the streets are nasty too. There are a lot of buildings. I would say it's run-down..." An even worse description was provided by Student H,

Not a good place to be, disgusting, be aware, dirty, filthy are all the words that come together, an old place, different types of people, not safe, and it stinks. I would say it's disgusting there. I feel sad and depressed when I'm there.

Yet, these extremely dismal views of this area were not shared by all of the students. Student F explained that, “It’s kinda crowded because it’s a bus station... There’s always people walking around there. It’s normal there. It makes me feel excited when I’m there.” Since this is a busy location in Camden near places such as the courthouse, the Camden County Administration building, which is the building with the mural on its side, and the bus station, many of the students were focused mainly on the busy nature of the area. The students’ original observations remained the same even after we visited the site with the exception of one student. Student F, the same student that gave a lengthy description of the mural on Haddon Avenue, noticed that there was a mural in this location as well. This student changed the description that was given prior to visiting this site from normal to beautiful and the emotion from normal to happy. Student F therefore is an indicator that at least one student felt a change in the presence of the mural.

The final mural that we visited for this study can be found on the side of Rafael Cordero Molina School at 601 Vine Street. The Molina School is split between two buildings, both located on the corner of their prospective streets. The mural is located in the parking lot on the secondary building which is one block down the street. It is a large mural that is hard to miss when standing on the corner where this school is situated. This delightful mural features children in their natural state of play. It demonstrates the creativity and beauty of childhood with great usage of color in order to illustrate their whimsical nature. Although it is a wonderful work of art, this site was one of the places that many of the students did not know of prior to our visit together.

While at the Molina School, many of the students determined that it was a run-down place. Student A commented that there was, “too much trash”, and Student D stated that it was, “...old, rusty...” going on to say, “ I just felt weird.” Almost all of the students had a similar reaction to the area and did not mention the fact that there was a mural on the wall of the second building of the school merely a block away. Once we walked to the second building, never specifically drawing any attention to the mural, I had the students stand on the corner and write down their descriptions. As was the case with the previous mural, only a few students took the time to include it in their description of the area. Both Student E and Student F mentioned the mural when I asked them to tell me about the area we visited. Student E stated that, “The second part had a mural with kids playing music...”, however the mural did not change this students perception of the area because this student indicated that the mural site was run-down. Not missing any of the murals, Student F again included the mural in the description saying that, “There was a mural with kids playing music. It was nice because it was quiet and I think from the houses there was a lot of people around there. I felt normal there.” This student consistently noticed the murals. The difference between Student F and the others that mentioned the murals is this student went into full detail about the murals themselves. Student F was unable to recall this site prior to visiting; therefore, I could not determine whether or not there was a change in description of emotion.

The data collected for the non-mural sites before we visited them in person was very similar. Students were almost evenly split between describing the three non-mural sites as nice, approximately 33%, and run-down, exactly 40%, having an even amount of answers situated on both the positive and the negative sides of the spectrum of descriptive words. The vast majority of

students, approximately 75%, also indicated that their emotions were normal when they thought about these sites. The fact that most of the students situated themselves in the normal range when thinking about these sites can either indicate their indifference or lack of real memory about the sites. One aside is that five out of the eight students did not know of the mural site located at the Molina School in North Camden or Litwins Corner Store. The students' inability to recall this school indicates that these two locations were not great choices for this research; however, the before findings were not crucial to this research. This could have potentially hurt my research, but the information I gathered after we visited the sites filled in most of the holes that were left by the preliminary portion of the research.

When asked about the locations containing murals prior to visiting them, the students were relatively split about their opinions of these areas. Roughly 55% of the student's answers indicated that they felt these locations were normal; however, 33% of the students believed that the sites containing murals were disgusting (a visual representation of the data can be found in Appendix C). This indicates that according to their memory, their perceptions overall of the mural sites did not lean towards the positive side of the spectrum. But, the emotions that these students associated with the mural sites were overwhelmingly identified, roughly 78%, by the students as normal, not sad or depressed. What this information reveals is that, according to their memory, the students' moods are not affected negatively or positively in the areas that contain murals. In fact, there was no mention at all of any of the murals before we actually visited the sites. This was a surprising discovery.

After we visited all of the locations, more students used positive adjectives to describe the sites; however, their emotions stayed almost exactly the same. Both the students' opinions and emotions attached to the non-mural sites stayed relatively the same after the visit. The students' memories of the sites that did not contain murals appeared to be accurate. Both the adjectives and the emotions that they associated with these places stayed within the same range indicating that there were no significant factors of these sites that made them change their perceptions of these locations.

The most fascinating discoveries were taken from the student answers pertaining to the mural sites. The majority of the students stated that they felt normal while at the mural sites, implying no change with regard to their emotions. However, there was a significant shift in their descriptions where now 21% of the students described the mural sites as nice versus the 5% that stated they were nice previously. The problem is that roughly the same amount of students still described the mural sites as run-down, approximately 37%, which is a greater number than those who believed the site to be either nice or simply normal. After visiting the sites, the overall majority of the students believed that the sites containing murals were unpleasant areas, which could indicate a number of things: most of these students do not appreciate artwork, young people do not consider architecture a defining characteristic of cities, which caused them to omit the buildings decorations from their descriptions, or simply a mural by itself is not enough to change the whole perception of the area. The latter answer is what I unfortunately believe to be the most accurate assumption.

DO MURALS IMPACT PEOPLES LIVES?

When I originally began this research, I set out to find how every day people reacted to murals. I hoped to discover how people that are not artists, part of a program to help make murals, politicians or civic employees with a vested interest in the appearance of their city, in other words people who in no way already have a predisposed interest in murals, felt about these large displays of artwork within their city. Essentially, I wanted to know if murals truly do make an impression on people's lives. My hopes were to discover that, they do impact people's lives in some way. Whether I was able to find out if murals impacted people psychologically or simply made them see their city in a different light, I hoped to learn that murals had a positive impact on the people who reside in cities.

Through this research, I was able to uncover many things the first of which is that murals do affect people's perceptions of certain areas but only modestly. A number of the students that I interviewed indicated that they changed their opinion of the places that contained murals, now calling them nice rather than their previous description of normal. While they were unable to recall that the area was pleasant in their memory, seeing the locations in person gave them a different opinion of that area. Then again, most of the students still believed these areas to be run-down even after they saw that there were large murals displayed in these three locations.

One major discovery of this research is that, although the murals themselves can slightly change ones attitude about a particular area, if the surrounding area is not kept clean and orderly, the murals lose some of their ability to improve the city. Prior to visiting both the mural located on Broadway

and Federal, and the one displayed on the Molina School in North Camden, students described these sites as “trashy” and “run-down.” These areas not only continued to be portrayed in negative ways, but fewer students were able to notice the murals in these locations because the overall appearance was un-kept in their eyes. Unless murals are placed in a noticeable spot set apart from other buildings, people will associate them with the general make-up of the area. What I have deduced from this is that the mural itself is not enough to improve certain areas; the surrounding environment must also undergo renovations.

Lastly, it appears that murals do not stand out to everyone. I found it surprising that none of the students mentioned murals during the preliminary questions, but most surprisingly, barely any of them mentioned the murals afterwards. Although I pay a lot of attention to murals, not everyone is fascinated by artwork. Additionally, it really depends on the individual whom you are asking. The one and only student who noticed all three of the murals is a very positive individual. Student F had extremely positive things to say in the descriptions and also went into great detail about the murals themselves. This student was observant and extremely in-tune with the environment. While all of the students did a great job with providing descriptions and details, Student F was one of the few to discuss specific things like noises even before we visited the sites. I believe that Student F proved that one’s perception of the environment has to do with his or her own characteristics and view of life. Unfortunately, I do not have the background to analyze the psychotherapeutic value of art within cities, but by simply conducting this small scale research I discovered that art is very specific to the individual.

CONCLUSION

There are many ways in which this research was successful, and there were also areas that need improvement. Throughout the planning stages of this research, I was able to uncover an extremely useful way of evaluating the impact of these murals. Rather than asking people point blank about the murals themselves, it is better to remove them from the equation to determine how people really feel about the area overall in which the murals are situated. It was not until I realized that it would be more beneficial to conduct this research in such a manner that I was able to think about what I really wanted to know from my subjects. Although I believe that my method of conducting this research was effective, there are a number of changes that need to be done in order for a later study to effectively obtain substantial information. For instance, the questions should have been more focused on the buildings themselves, rather than an overall description of the area, while being careful not to reveal the aim of the research. There also should have been a larger test group with several more locations which would have diversified the findings much more. Since I am a novice in this field, I was not able to conduct a more in depth research study; however I hope that this study will lead to future research.

Although murals give a unique character to many American cities, it is premature to conclude whether or not they play a large role in improving the cities they are within. One fact that is clear is if a city like Camden is not properly maintained by cleaning the streets of trash and renovating abandoned buildings, murals may just be putting a small band aid on a big cut. However, there is a great deal of hope for murals efforts because it is apparent that they do have *some* impact of residents. Even though the research I conducted showed that the

murals did not improve the majority of the students' perceptions of certain areas, several did reveal a change in their feelings. Art can be a means to touch people's lives in a way that nothing else can. If more extensive research is conducted in this area, I believe it will reveal a lot more about the ability that art has to inspire positive change.

Photographs



Figure 1. *I Saw a City Invincible*, by Cesar Viveros



Figure 2. Camden County Aletha R. Wright Administration Building



Figure 3. Rafael Cordero Molina Elementary School



Figure's 4 and 5. Whitman Park



Figure 6 & 7. Camden High



Figure 8. Litwin's Corner Store

Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

I would first like to start by thanking you for participating in this study. I will be asking you some questions that may not be easy to answer. I encourage you to answer to the best of your ability. There are no wrong answers.

Statement of Confidentiality:

Your identity will remain anonymous and only the researchers will have access to this information.

1) Can you physically describe Haddon Ave and Market Street in Camden?

a. Pick one adjective that describes this place:

Beautiful Nice Normal Run-Down Disgusting

b. Pick one adjective that describes how you feel when you are at/or thinking about this place:

Excited Happy Normal Sad
Depressed

2) Can you physically describe Camden High School?

a. Pick one adjective that describes this place:

Beautiful Nice Normal Run-Down Disgusting

b. Pick one adjective that describes how you feel when you are at/or thinking about this place:

Excited Happy Normal Sad
Depressed

3) Can you physically describe Whitman High park?

a. Pick one adjective that describes this place:

Beautiful Nice Normal Run-Down Disgusting

b. Pick one adjective that describes how you feel when you are at/or thinking about this place:

Excited Happy Normal Sad
Depressed

- 4) Can you physically describe Broadway and Federal Street where the Camden County Administration building is located?

a. Pick one adjective that describes this place:

Beautiful Nice Normal Run-Down Disgusting

b. Pick one adjective that describes how you feel when you are at/or thinking about this place:

Excited Happy Normal Sad
Depressed

- 5) Can you physically describe the Molina School in North Camden?

a. Pick one adjective that describes this place:

Beautiful Nice Normal Run-Down Disgusting

b. Pick one adjective that describes how you feel when you are at/or thinking about this place:

Excited Happy Normal Sad
Depressed

- 6) Can you physically describe the Elm Street where Litwin's Corner store is located?

a. Pick one adjective that describes this street:

Beautiful Nice Normal Run-Down Disgusting

b. Pick one adjective that describes how you feel when you are at/or thinking about this street:

Excited Happy Normal Sad
Depressed

Appendix B

Student's Responses to Questionnaire

Student A

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

A lot of people, a lot of stores. There is a different type of culture between the people. I would describe this place as normal, and I feel normal while I think about or am at Haddon Ave.

2.) <Camden High School>

Big, lots of students, cautious, and it has a bad reputation. It's getting remodeled. Overall, I like the way it looks. I would describe this place as nice. When I think about this place I am happy.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

Sporty, spacious, a place to have fun. This place is nice, and I am excited when I am at or thinking about it.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

Crowded, a lot of buildings. This place is nice, and I feel normal when I am at or thinking about this place.

5.) <Molina School>

Crowded, normal, a lot of kids—mostly young people. The outside of the building is alright in terms of it having a good building structure. This place is normal, and I feel normal while I am at or thinking about this place.

6.) <Litwins Corner store> N/A

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

I wrote that I saw a school, wide streets, lots of vehicles, highways, housing, and a gas station. I would say it is nice and I felt normal when I was there. There are decorations, clean streets, and it seems calm.

2.) <Camden High School>

It is in construction, very big, there were lots of vehicles, lots of housing, and a nearby park. This place is normal. I felt normal.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

Okay it is sporty, spacious, entertaining, there's a school nearby, lots of housing, lots of vehicles, a train station, hospital nearby, and a nearby cemetery. I think it is beautiful because personally I love sports because it keeps me entertained. It makes me happy.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

There were lots of buildings, run-down buildings, a bus station, public library, McDonalds, Cooper Hospital, and City Hall. It is nice because the scenery, it's near city hall, they put trees, they put flowers there, they are making the world a better place. It made me happy.

5.) <Molina School>

Molina School was run-down, there was too much trash, lots of housing, a nearby corner store, trashy, and it was near other schools. It was run-down. I felt normal.

6.) <Litwin's Corner store>

The corner store was crowded, there was food, nearby housing, and crazy people. Both answers are normal for me.

Student B

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

I rarely walk down that street without being in the car or walking out of the hospital, so I'd say there are a bunch of people at the bus stop, there are cocaine-looking type people. There are also good people that are around the bus stop, but its too crowded down there. There are a bunch of homeless people, and you see them on every corner sleeping or something like that. At the McDonald's, there are homeless people in there and they'll be asking for money or whatever—especially in the morning. When I used to go to school there, I used to walk to the McDonald's every day. Cooper Hospital looks very nice on the outside and the inside because they just rebuilt it or something like that. Otherwise, a lot of rebuilding, they have a lot of that. McDonald's does not look nice at all: they need to rebuild it. And the streets are not that clean, but it's not as bad as North Camden or something. One adjective that describes this place is run-down. I feel normal when I am at or thinking about this pace.

2.) <Camden High> N/A

3.) <Whitman High Park>

There are a lot of kids there and it doesn't look bad. They're always playing a game or something. There is a baseball field and it doesn't look bad from the baseball fields I have practiced on. And across from that are the dug-outs; it looks okay. One adjective to describe this place is nice. When I am at or thinking about this place I feel normal.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

I see students everywhere, the little stores on the wheels (carts), homeless people, a building for cars, mostly I'm walking there for school. I took the bus all during the three-week program, and it's not really bad. This place is normal. My emotions at this place are sad.

5.) <Molina School>

They have a basketball court and I go there with my cousin every time I go to my grandma's house because he lives with my grandma. The courts are not that nice, but it's a basketball court—it's usable. They have a playground with graffiti all over it—graffiti everywhere. There are no nets on the basketball courts, except for only one. This place is run-down. I feel normal when I am there.

6.) <Litwin's Corner Store>

I go there all the time. Abandoned houses, there is a big field that they need to cut sometimes, and it just looks... you know how they tear down a brick building? It looks like that—old and stuff like that. The store is not that bad: I buy cheese steaks from there all the time when I go to my cousins house. Their patallios are really good. The street is all bumpy, and the courts is right next to there, like three blocks, so every time I go to the courts I always get a snack afterwards. There are people that live there, they look nice I guess. They look like regular North Camden people. This place is run-down, and I feel normal when I am at this place.

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

I saw a mural that looks very nice despite the trash. Cooper hospital makes the street look nice. There's a police station and loud music from vehicles, that's it. It was normal. It made me feel normal.

2.) <Camden High School>

It looks very old, I can that they performed constructions but never finished. I would say it run-down because it is dirty and I heard lots of things about that school. I felt normal when I was there.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

The baseball field looks fairly okay. The playground has graffiti all over it and there are gown men at the playground with no children on site. It is very trashy. It would describe it as normal and I felt normal.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

It didn't smell very good but there are homeless people all around you, there are tons of cars, lots of cars. It is pretty run-down. I felt normal.

5.) <Molina School>

Regular school, very old looking, there is a Chinese store across the street, and uh, that's it. An adjective to describe it would be normal. I would say sad because I don't think it is a nice environment for kids to learn.

6.) <Litwin's Corner store>

It doesn't look very clean, there are abandoned buildings next to the store, and it is pretty run-down. Normal.

Student C

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

I see buildings, people, sometimes cops because there's a police department over there, I see lights, bums (not to be ignorant), and that's basically it. An adjective that describes it best is pretty normal because there is a hospital nearby so they have to keep it clean I guess. I am honestly not caring when I am there, so normal.

2.) <Camden High>

There's construction on top. It looks like a haunted school. I do remember one time when I was little I went to the bathroom there, and it was disgusting: it looked like somebody got beat up in there. It looks haunted because it has like no color to it, it looks dull, it looks like a tower, it looks stacked up. An adjective to describe it would be run-down. No disrespect toward the school, but when I just look at it, I think to myself, I'm glad I'm not in that school. So... I don't know how to express that emotion, but I guess it would be more sad.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

You know the big park around here with the big pool or something like that? It looks kinda like that, if I remember correctly. It looks kinda like that, but in a more, this might sound kinda street, but it's more of a boondocks kinda theme. Like, I would say, it's kinda deserted in an environment where it's more disgusting. An adjective to describe this place would be disgusting, and I feel normal when I am at or thinking about this place.

4.) <Broadway and Federal> N/A

5.) <Molina School> N/A

6.) <Litwin's Corner> N/A

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

Okay I wrote down that I saw a mural, cars, people, Verizon, buildings and stop lights. Normal. Normal.

2.) <Camden High School>

Camden High was really run-down, it looks haunted, no offense but it had a non-likeable park, and that's it. It makes me sad because the school it looks dull.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

Okay. Baseball-okay, playground, one thing about the playground is it is broken-down. I didn't like that. The sun was shining though. It was nice. Happy.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

There were cars, people, a parking lot, and McDonalds. A few bad things though, the parking lot looks deserted, I wouldn't park my car there. It was normal. I would say sad and that basically goes towards McDonalds because I wouldn't want to eat in a nasty place like that.

5.) <Molina School>

Trash, cars, the school looked ugly, no offense, the parking lot looked dirty, that really didn't look nice. And again, it was in a bad surrounding. It was run-down. Sad.

6.) <Litwin's Corner store>

People, cars, of course, and I know I said this a lot but, ugly surrounding yet again. Disgusting. It made me sad.

Student D

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

My grandma lives on that street. The street has old buildings, not a lot of people—but people—I guess not so clean, a lot of trash. I would say this place is run-down, and I feel normal when I am thinking about or at this place.

2.) <Camden High> N/A

3.) This place is old. I never see people there—only like two or three. The baseball field looks like it sucks. This place is normal. I feel normal while I think about or am at this place.

4.) <Broadway and Federal>

There is trash, a lot of people, and that's pretty much it. That place looks old. I think it is run-down there, and I feel normal when I am there or thinking about it.

5.) <Molina School> N/A

6.) <Litwin's>

The streets are bad because the way it looks, like pot-holes and stuff. I guess there are a not lot of people. I know I have been to the baseball field around there. That baseball field sucks, too. It is run-down, and I feel normal while I am there or thinking about it.

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

Mural, trees, busy street, okay streets, and Cooper Hospital. Nice. Because just the way it looks. I didn't see any trash, the mural, and the hospital looks nice. I felt normal.

2.) <Camden High School>

I saw a rusty sign, it's old, construction going on, and trash on the floor. It's run-down. In between normal and sad, I felt weird there.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

The park had an old playground, bad baseball field, old basketball court, trash all over the playground, messed up broken swings. Run-down. Weird.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

There was traffic and a lot of buildings. That's it. It was normal. Normal.

5.) <Molina School>

Trash, old, rusty, small. It's run-down. I felt weird.

6.) <Litwin's Corner store>

There were people walking around, old buildings, and abandoned houses. It was normal. Normal.

Student E

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

It's a real busy street with a lot of traffic, there are a lot of people walking by. There wouldn't be too many casualties in that area that I know of. There are real big buildings, there is a six-way intersection, traffic lights that usually don't work, most of the time they do. This place is... I guess a little run-down. When I am at this place I feel normal.

2.) <Camden High>

On the outside of the building, there is a lot of construction work, a lot of people walking by, its on a main street so there are a lot of cars coming by, a lot of traffic, a lot of fights, a lot of steps—believe that. The building is a little old. This place is run-down, and I feel normal when I think about this place.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

There is a tall gate, it's usually not empty, there is a baseball field and a basketball court, and I think there's a lot of grass near there. It is nice there. It makes me feel normal when I think about it.

4.) <Broadway and Federal>

It is very busy. The street is real wide, but there is still a whole lot of traffic so there are a couple of car accidents—a lot of cops around there. The police station is right around the corner. There's about one to two big buildings around there—I don't think I ever really stopped to figure out what they are. It is normal there. When I am thinking about this place I feel normal.

5.) <Molina School>

It's a long street. Every time I'm on that street, I'm walking so it's really long. Not too much traffic, though, during the daytime. There's a real big parking lot with a gate. It is normal to me. I feel normal when I am at or thinking about this place.

6.) <Litwin's>

The street is pretty much like in the back, not many people on it, a lot of houses nearby. You don't really see too many people walking around it, but when you do go on the inside it's always packed. It is run-down in that area. When I think about this street, I get normal emotions.

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

There was traffic, trees, abandoned buildings, big buildings, wide streets. I'd say it is run-down because that abandoned building has been there for years and pretty much the traffic. It was normal.

2.) <Camden High School>

It is old, confined, quarantined, and I wrote trees. It's run-down. I feel pretty normal.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

I wrote that it is grassy, has tall fences, tall trees, playground, baseball lot, and a basketball court. It's nice because it is very grassy except for that one part where all the stuff is looking dead. They got football courts and basketball courts. Normal.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

Lots of traffic, lots of buildings. It's normal. I felt normal.

5.) <Molina School>

It's pretty old, a lot of leaves, a lot of stores. Run-down. Because it looked pretty old and the way the front of the school looked was pretty trashy. The second part had a mural with kids playing music, um, yea. That's all I got.

6.) <Litwin's Corner store>

There wasn't that many people around the store, there wasn't that much trash, no traffic lights, and not a lot of traffic.

Student F

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

Very crowded with people, cars, a lot of noise. There are a lot of stores around there, a lot of buildings—they're tall. I don't know. This place is normal to me. When I am thinking about this place I feel happy.

2.) <Camden High> N/A

3.) <Whitman High Park> N/A

4.) <Broadway and Federal>

It's kinda crowded because it's the bus station. I don't think it's that noisy, and it's kinda normal. There's always people walking around there. It's normal there. It makes me feel excited when I am there.

5.) <Molina> N/A

6.) <Litwin's> N/A

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

I wrote there was a mural with different types of peoples holding different types of things, a lot of cars and buses, hospital sign, police department, Cooper Hospital, a couple of people walking around, Verizon building, gas station, and a lot of trees. It is beautiful because of the mural and because it is nice that people put stuff like that because it makes it look nicer. Happy.

2.) <Camden High School>

Big school, park in front of it, boys and girls club close to it, there was that guy selling cold water, constructions going on in school, a lot of cars, there were a lot of houses around, little people walking around, a lot of trees, I wrote it was kind of loud, there was a lot of trash around, and a lot of cars parked outside. It was kinda run-down. It made me sad because there are a lot of trees and I think that they need a cleaner place to be in because it is trashy.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

There's a baseball court, it's very trashy, a lot of apartments in front—at least I think that's what they were—Medical Arts on the side, couple of people were in the park, it was quiet, kind of big, Julia taking pictures, there were not so many cars parked outside, and the grass was kind of dry. I think it was normal. Normal.

4.) <Broadway and Federal Street>

I think there is a lot of protection around there and the people around there are really friendly. There's a courthouse, a big clock, mural with men working on the one side and women on the other, it was very noisy, a lot of buses and a lot of people walking around, and a lot of buildings around. It is beautiful and it makes me happy there.

5.) <Molina School>

It was quiet. There were barely any people walking around and a lot of houses surrounding it. There was a grocery store, a lot of cars parked, and buses going by. There was a mural with kids playing music. It was nice because it was quiet and I think from the houses there was a lot of people around there. I felt normal there.

6.) <Litwin's Corner store>

I saw a food market, 2-3 people walking around, few cars going by, a lot of trees, it was quiet, and there were crazy people. It was normal. I felt normal there.

Student G

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

Always busy, a lot of buildings, there's a hospital, houses, there's some trees and plants and stuff. This place is a normal place. When I am there, I feel normal.

2.) <Camden High>

There's no schools around it, construction work is being done, it's near a busy street. It kinda looks like it's falling apart. I would say it's run-down. When I think about or am at this place I feel normal.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

It's kinda run-down, like, there's people smoking and different things like that. I haven't been there in so long. When I think about it, I would say it's in-between normal and run-down. I feel normal when I think about it.

4.) <Broadway and Federal>

A lot of people, nasty (some of the people), the streets are nasty too. There are a lot of buildings. I would say it's run-down, and it makes me feel normal there/

5.) <Molina> N/A

6.) <Litwin's> N/A

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

Basically it's a highway, Camcare, cyclists, billboards, hospital, traffic, police station, bridge, and a mural. Where the parking was at, it was less like trees and plants and stuff like that—like, what I was thinking was right there where the emergency room of the hospital is: I was thinking of that thing with all those trees. I would say it was nice, and that I felt happy there.

2.) <Camden High>

I put there was a lot of nature—like you could see the trees and the birds and stuff like that, people walking around, cars, signs, houses, traffic, the Boys and Girls Club, and I put how there was an older building. I would say now that it is normal, and that it makes me feel normal.

3.) <Whitman Park>

I put there was no shade, there were homes nearby, normal area, a calm setting, a lot of graffiti, and a lot of recreation area—it's nice. I feel normal there.

4.) <Broadway and Federal>

I put newspaper and vending machines, people, a guy like pacing back and forth, the Riverline, traffic lights, abandoned buildings, and dirty old buildings. It is run-down there, and I feel normal.

5. <Molina School>

Some pretty flowers, needs more construction, very few people, and very little traffic.... and a crazy girl! It is rundown, and I feel normal there.

6. <Litwin's>

I put it's a bigger corner-store than usual, less traffic, and that was it. I think it's normal, and I felt normal there.

Student H

BEFORE VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave>

Local, it's like convenient for the community because there are different types of stores, it provides to people that have different needs: it has food, you got clothing stores there, and stuff like that. There are some dilapidated buildings and they're trying to fix it up. It's how you make it. I would say this place is pretty normal because I come from there. I feel a variety of different emotions toward it there, because I live there, but then again it's not where I want to be at the same time.

2.) <Camden High>

I have relatives and family that went there, and from what I heard it's like a huge family there, but it's a lot of kids, but at the same time that wouldn't be my first choice. I would say it's a pretty normal variety and slightly unorganized. It's pretty much just run-down, to be honest. I feel normal when I am at this place.

3.) <Whitman High Park>

It's a pretty nice park, despite the community—the park itself is a good place to be. The playground and things like that is up to par. It is nice there, and I feel aware when I am at or thinking about this place; aware because I like my surroundings.

4.) <Broadway and Federal>

Definitely dilapidated. Not a nice place to be: it's just disgusting I would say. It's disgusting because the people made it that way. There's just littering and writing on the walls (she called it graffiti, absolutely *not* art). I think it's disgusting there—horrible. I feel disappointed when I am there, so like I feel sad and depressed there because it could be much better.

5.) <Molina> N/A

6.) <Litwin's> N/A

AFTER VISITING SITES

1.) <Haddon Ave.>

It is more cleaner, well like the educational side, like near the Rutgers, but like near the local neighborhood it's not that good. When we were walking together, I didn't see no littering, and yeah, the buildings are good. Yeah, I would still say it's normal, but at the same time it's unfair. I would still say I feel normal there.

2.) <Camden High>

It's a very old school, and it's extremely large, it's a historical building, and it's not so safe, but the school is traditional, and kids go there. I would still say it's run-down. When I go there, I would still say I feel normal.

3.) <Whitman Park>

I think it's nice, but at the same time it can be more like... maintenance is needed, as seen that time. The surroundings are okay, but it could be better. I'd say it's normal there (went down from the first time when she said nice). I still feel normal when I am there.

4.) <Broadway and Federal>

Not a good place to be, disgusting, be aware, dirty, filthy are all the words that come together, an old place, different types of people, not safe, and it stinks. I would say it's disgusting there. I feel sad and depressed when I'm there.

5.) <Molina>

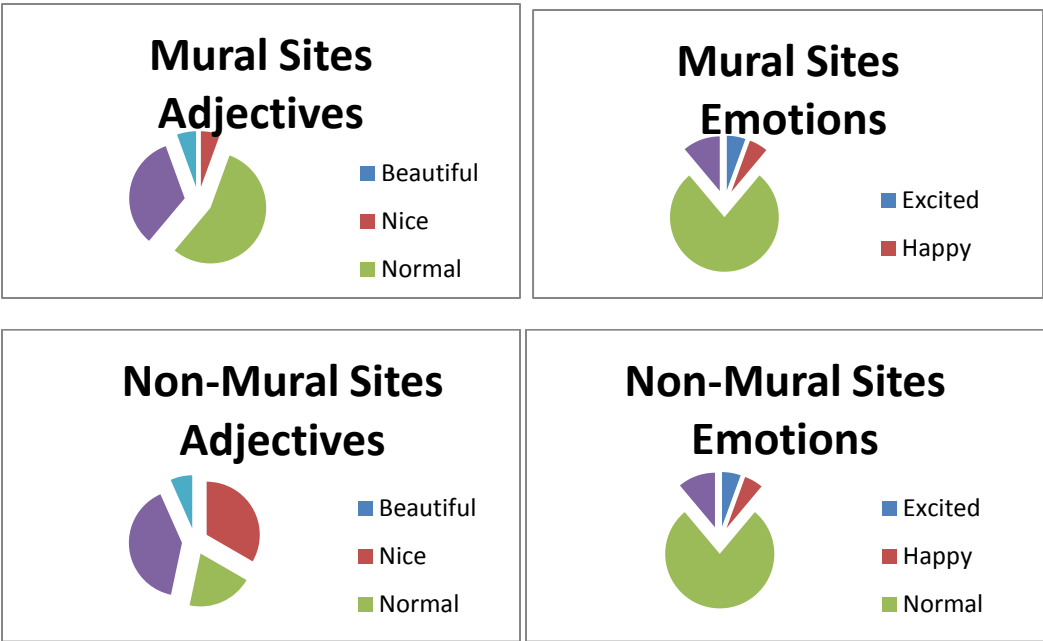
It was a nice school, it looked like it was well put-together, I've never been inside but it looks okay and the expectations look high, and the school looked close and well-maintained. I would say it's nice there, and I feel normal when I am there.

6.) <Litwin's>

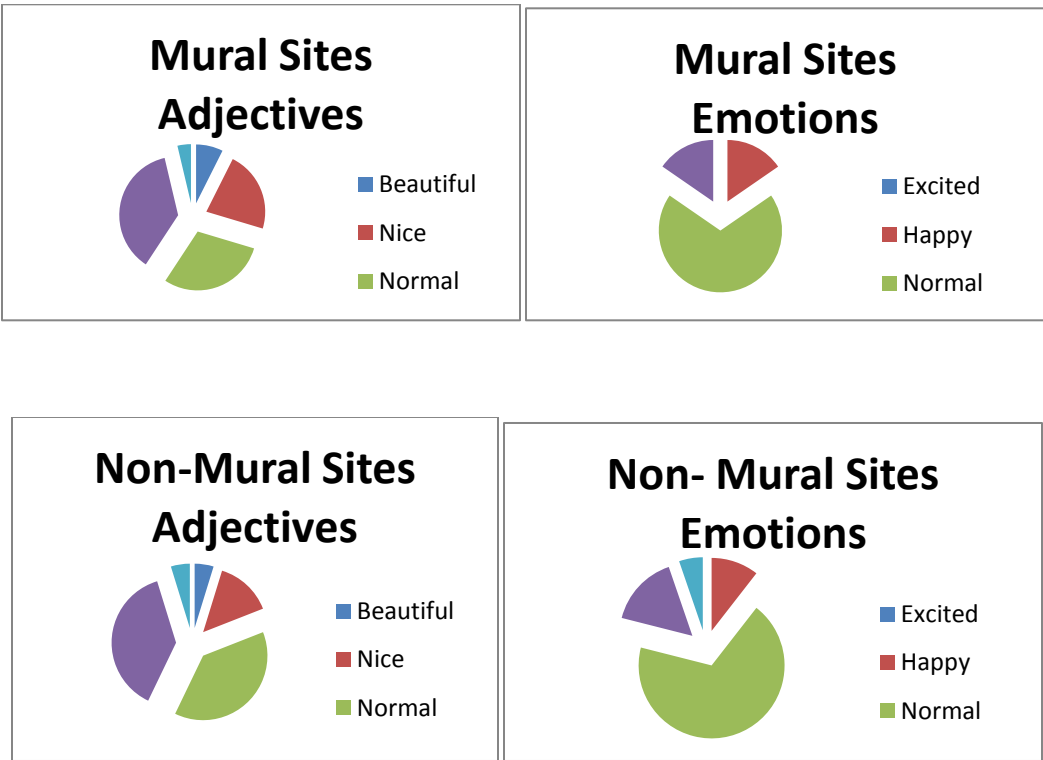
Dangerous, unexpected, and I don't really remember the neighborhood. I would say it's run-down. I would say I felt sad and depressed there.

Appendix C: Charts

Research Findings Before Visiting



Research Findings After Visiting



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